

The State of the State Addresses: Governors Hesitant in Promising More¹

By Katherine Willoughby and Anna Sexton

The slow economy and unpredictable Trump administration have governors in a bit of a straitjacket, some more than others. Chief executives in states with reasonably stable finances are able to speak positively to their public—some are opting for long overdue pay raises for state workers, expanding programs, innovating others, and replenishing rainy day funds. Those in states suffering financially are less sanguine, holding firm to tight agendas by limiting policy concerns, discussion about budget priorities and/or emphasizing the need for continued hard work and sacrifices ahead. This is the first year since 2007 that gubernatorial concerns and policy options related to economic development and jobs have fallen from the top three issues considered by at least two thirds of governors. In 2007, these concerns tracked fifth in terms of being mentioned by at least 66 percent of state chief executives. The Great Recession officially began later that year and states seemingly have yet to fully recover.

Party Politics Are Very Red

U.S. states are politically red, with 33 Republican governors, 16 Democratic governors and one Independent (Alaska). Consistent with 2015 and 2016, only seven states are entirely blue with a Democratic governor and legislature. Republicans gained governorships in Missouri, Vermont and New Hampshire, and Democrats gained the governorship in North Carolina with Roy Cooper (D) winning a very hotly-contested race. Control of state legislatures remains significantly red, too. Republicans control both chambers in 32 legislatures compared to Democratic control in 14 legislatures. Only three states—Maine, Colorado and Connecticut—have split legislative control. Connecticut’s Senate is evenly split between Republicans and Democrats, so Lt. Gov. Nancy Wyman (D) will have to cast tie-breaking votes in that state’s senate. Legislatures in several states have functioning coalitions different from party lines, however that influence deliberations and governing. For example, in Alaska, Democrats and some moderate Republicans have developed a coalition in the House to map a way forward for this state’s budget woes. This gives Democrats functional control of the chamber, even though Republicans are the majority party.² In New York, independent Democrats are partnering with Republicans in the Senate to give the GOP control, in spite of a Democrat majority.³ Washington’s Senate has a Majority Coalition Caucus, or MCC; the Senate is technically majority Democratic, but the MCC includes Republicans and one Democrat to swing

functional majority of the 49 member body to Republicans.⁴ Partisan control of the states in 2017 includes:

- Twenty-four with a Republican governor and Republican legislature;
- One with a Republican governor and a unicameral, nonpartisan legislature;
- One with a Republican governor, Democratic house and Republican senate;
- Seven with a Republican governor and a Democratic legislature;
- One with an Independent governor and Republican legislature;
- Seven with a Democratic governor and a Republican legislature;
- One with a Democratic governor, Democratic house and Republican senate;
- One with a Democratic governor, Democratic house and split senate; and
- Seven with a Democratic governor and Democratic legislature.⁵

State Finances Remain Rather Tight

As we head into the eighth year following the end of the Great Recession, state chief executives still are cautious about making big promises. Putting aside the state of the economy, the new federal administration certainly contributes to gubernatorial fiscal and policy jitters. The Trump administration has yet to tackle tax reform, but promises infrastructure spending, wall-building, military interventions and

Gubernatorial Agendas for 2018

Katherine Barrett and Richard Greene, senior fellows with The Council of State Governments, examined gubernatorial addresses this year and generated word clouds for every speech.⁹ Word clouds present a picture of words in text according to individual word frequency of use, suggesting their weight or importance to the author. Such presentation of the speeches in clumps of words is telling in highlighting the substance of each address and interests of particular governors. While not reading too much into a sampling of clouds, notice distinctive words of chief executives across various states that hone in on specific public policy problems and concerns in Figure A. Georgia and Idaho, mentioned previously as states in reasonably good fiscal health, present mostly upbeat statements using words like accentuate, positive, opportunities, responsibility, expand, support and developing. Wyoming stresses “steady as you go” emphasizing continuation. Montana’s governor concentrates on economics—building, businesses, investments and work. New Jersey’s chief execu-

tive spoke almost exclusively about the opioid scourge in his state with words like, abuse, addiction, crisis, death, disease, drug, recovery and treatment. Maine’s governor indicates concerns about costs, and hones in on disabled, elderly, harm and reduce. Alaska’s governor focuses on the state’s budget challenges, mentioning as much along with oil, fiscal, gap, dollars and problem. Illinois governor’s word cloud is interesting—he is encouraging with words like, better, changes, create, ensure and future—but concentrates on jobs and working a way out of long standing budget problems. Maryland is included as an example of a rather “skinny” word cloud; few issues were mentioned frequently enough to warrant text heft. South Carolina’s is interesting, given that Gov. Nikki Haley left the chief executive position in her state in January 2017 to become the United States Ambassador to the United Nations, having been appointed by President Donald Trump. Her address is the only one with an emphasis on “love.”

Table A examines issues mentioned by chief executives in their state of state speeches for the

Table A: Issues Mentioned by Governors in State of the State Addresses, 2012–2017

<i>Issue expressed by governors</i>	<i>2012 percentage of governors mentioning the issue (N=43)</i>	<i>2013 percentage of governors mentioning the issue (N=49)</i>	<i>2014 percentage of governors mentioning the issue (N=42)</i>	<i>2015 percentage of governors mentioning the issue (N=44)</i>	<i>2016 percentage of governors mentioning the issue (N=43)</i>	<i>2017 percentage of governors mentioning the issue (N=48)</i>
Education	95.3%	100.0%	95.2%	90.9%	88.4%	93.8%
Tax/revenue initiative	81.4	71.4	66.7	72.7	62.8	70.8
Health care	55.8	79.6	73.8	59.1	65.1	66.7
Economic development/jobs	90.7	77.6	83.3	81.8	72.1	58.3
Safety/corrections	55.8	67.3	73.8	63.6	62.8	58.3
Natural resources/energy	65.1	57.1	59.5	61.4	53.5	50
Performance/accountability	55.8	30.6	33.3	56.8	39.5	45.8
Transportation/roads/bridges	48.8	46.9	50	68.2	48.8	41.7
Surplus/deficit/rainy day funds/reserves	60.5	32.7	54.8	36.4	32.6	37.5
Pensions/OPEBs	32.6	18.4	21.4	4.6	18.6	14.6
Transparency	25.6	12.2	26.2	11.4	9.3	10.4
Local government	25.6	14.3	26.2	36.4	30.2	8.3
Borders/illegal immigrants	11.6	8.2	7.1	6.8	4.7	8.3
Ethics reform	7	16.3	14.3	20.5	7	2.1
Debt reduction	7	6.1	16.7	6.8	7	0
Average # of Issues Mentioned by Governors	7.2	6.4	7	7.3	6	6
# Issues Mentioned by >66% of Governors	3	5	5	4	2	3

Source: Content analysis of state of state addresses conducted by Megan Phillips, MPA candidate and Sarah Beth Gehl, Ph.D. candidate, Public Policy (2012); Sarah Beth Gehl, Ph.D. candidate, Public Policy (2013); Keegan Smith, MPA candidate (2014 and 2015); Katherine Willoughby (2016); Anna Sexton, MPP candidate (2017) and Katherine Willoughby, all of the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, Georgia State University, Atlanta, Ga.

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last six years, indicating the proportion of governors discussing specific topics as relevant to their budget and policy agendas in the 2018 fiscal year and going forward. On average, governors addressed six of 15 issues—no change from last year. Governors in Indiana, Maryland and South Dakota addressed nine issues each. Two governors focused on just a few issues, though in some detail. Gov. Chris Christie (R) of New Jersey considered three issues:

- **Health care**—addressed the state’s opioid problem, promoted new law protecting those with health insurance from being denied coverage for drug rehabilitation treatment, and expanding pediatric behavioral health programming to reduce or obliterate wait times to see specialists.
- **Revenue**—supported initiatives to cut sales taxes, do away with death and estate taxes, and bolster credits for the working poor.
- **Pension**—promoted the “most generous” payments into the state pension system across the last few administrations.

Washington’s Gov. Jay Inslee (D), in his talk titled, “Let’s Get This Job Done,” considered just two issues—education and taxes. His revenue strategy includes cutting property taxes for “75 percent of households and businesses,” increasing business and occupation taxes for some services, taxing carbon polluters, and increasing capital gains taxes on “a small percentage of the wealthiest Washingtonians.”

This year, at least two-thirds of governors lay out their education, revenue and health care concerns. As explained earlier, the new Trump administration along with the slow growth economy, are two reasons that governors seem to remain hesitant in making expansive promises regarding state services and programming; many are pushing to “stay the course.” For example, Connecticut’s Gov. Malloy (D), concentrated on a few issues that have been recurring themes in his administration: 1) search for cost-efficiencies to spend less and keep the executive workforce low; 2) fully-fund current pension obligations but re-negotiate for more affordable, predictable payments going forward; and 3) reform education funding to local governments. Similarly, many governors are emphasizing efforts that have been on their agendas for a couple of years.

There is a noticeable drop in gubernatorial emphasis regarding economic development and jobs, considered by 58.3 percent of governors in

2017 compared to 72.1 percent in 2016. Economic development and jobs have placed second or third in importance to governors in all years since 2008. In 2007, when data from these addresses were first collected and coded for *The Book of the States* to track gubernatorial emphasis, economic development placed fifth, behind education, health, revenues and natural resources. The Great Recession officially started later that year, in December.

Tax and revenue initiatives made the greatest positive leap in terms of consideration by governors—8 percent more governors discussed their revenue plans in 2017 compared to 2016. Local government initiatives (aside from local schools) indicate the greatest drop in concern by governors; 30.2 percent of governors discussed local governments in 2016 compared to 8.3 percent in 2017. No governors this year discussed debt reduction and fewer discussed other liabilities such as pensions. Reduced gubernatorial interest is evidenced regarding ethics reform, transportation and infrastructure, natural resources and energy, and safety and corrections when comparing 2017 to 2016. Again, governors may be waiting for policy initiatives to be clarified by President Trump and Congress before obligating to initiatives in these areas.

On the other hand, concerns about performance and accountability measures as well as balance (surplus/deficit/rainy day funds and reserves) both realized an uptick in interest by governors. Governors, as state chief managers, must continually keep an eye out for possible efficiencies, and uncertainty and fiscal malaise can heighten interest in such. Most of the governors concerned with balance indicated interest in maintaining and/or replenishing rainy day funds as a fiscal stewardship measure. Governors in Hawaii, Indiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Tennessee and Vermont argued this point. Wyoming’s governor holds the opposite view, however, given his state’s fiscal woes. Gov. Matthew Mead (R) chided legislators about having “\$1.6 billion in the rainy day fund. It appears without a diversion that I’ve asked for from all of you ... It’s a hard message for the people of Wyoming, as we’ve made in excess of \$300 million cuts since last session and [yet] we would continue to grow the rainy day fund, and goes again to the question, what is the rainy day fund for, and what are you going to use it for.” Governors in Alaska and Texas proposed state employee salary freezes or cuts to close gaps. Alaska’s Gov. Bill Walker (I) claimed to “lead by example” having slashed his

salary by a third. Illinois Gov. Bruce Rauner (R) was the most dystopian regarding perpetual fiscal imbalance in his state:

We haven't had a full year budget of some kind in a year and a half—and we haven't had a state budget that is truly balanced in decades. We have more than \$11 billion in unpaid bills, a \$130 billion unfunded pension liability, and the worst credit rating in the nation. We have the 5th highest overall tax burden and one of the lowest rates of job creation of any state. These problems aren't new. They've been building up for many years as past governors and General Assemblies—from both political parties—kicked the can down the road to avoid making tough decisions. Years of irresponsible borrowing and deficit spending have been devastating to human service organizations that assist children, senior citizens, people with behavioral health issues and disabilities, and our other most vulnerable residents. It has caused student and faculty departures at our colleges and universities. Decades of undisciplined spending and uncompetitive regulations and taxes have made employers hesitant about coming or staying in Illinois, limiting job opportunities across the state. We are seeing the collective impact of those realities from Carbondale to Chicago, from East St. Louis to Danville. Families and employers are leaving. Nonprofits and small businesses are cutting staff and services. We are failing to be compassionate because we are failing to be competitive. These problems aren't new, but these problems are now ours to solve. We can, and we must, do better ... we all agree that we must have a truly balanced budget and we must make changes to our broken system to return our state to a path of prosperity.

***Top Concerns of Governors:
Education, Health and Taxes***

Regarding education, while some governors provided their budget numbers only related to education funding, others explained in detail their ideas for improving schools and advancing knowledge-building in their state. Many discussed their agendas related to early childhood education, local schools, STEM initiatives, higher education and adult programming. Common themes addressed included increasing enrollment in pre-kindergarten, expanding full-day kindergarten, improving high school graduation rates, advancing college

success in terms of job readiness, and increasing the percentage of adults with a higher education degree. Gubernatorial initiatives to improve schools included creating or expanding school choice (charter schools), teacher pay raises and/or advanced training, school administrator training, pressing forward with technology advancements and improving connectivity across school districts, modernizing school funding formulas to better reward successful schools (related to student progress) and to advance equal access, directing efforts and funding to the neediest students, and improving and expanding programs for special students. To support student success, several governors pushed for more attention to vocational training and apprenticeship programs to provide clear paths to high-paying careers. Governors in Alaska, Massachusetts and Montana each discussed specific groups needing focused attention related to primary and secondary education services—“to inspire tribal and community involvement” in Alaska; to create “empowerment zones” in Massachusetts; and investments in “preserving Native languages” in Montana. Ohio Gov. John Kasich (R) had a novel approach for improving local schools:

I want to put non-voting business people on the school board. Why? Because I want the non-voting business people to start telling the school board about what the curriculum ought to look like, about how we can have flexibility, about how we can have more kids out into the workforce I want to make sure that our teachers, when they go for their relicensure, that they spend a few days working in a business, learning about the workforce needs of the community.

Regarding higher education, several governors focused on college affordability, freezing college and university fees and capping tuition, and creating or increasing scholarship opportunities. Others called for increased spending on infrastructure, often to support new or enhanced cybersecurity or STEM initiatives. Governors in New York, Rhode Island and Tennessee each proposed some form of tuition free college. Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam (R) went further by explaining a state program that “will provide last-dollar scholarships for adult learners to attend a community college for free—at no cost to the state’s General Fund the Act would be the first in the nation to offer all citizens—high school students and adults—access to a degree or certificate free of tuition and fees.” He also pushed for tuition free attendance to the

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state's universities and colleges for members of the military.

Regarding taxes and revenues, there were a few governors who simply mentioned their future agenda to review their state's tax structure, or modernize and reform it. Still, 19 governors described specific tax cuts while a dozen proposed increasing taxes, creating new ones, or reauthorizing fees. (Some governors discussed both increasing and decreasing various taxes or fees.) Ideas on cuts to taxes included those regarding sales, cars, property, business and personal income, death, estate and inventory taxes. Tax credits for businesses that hire veterans was mentioned, as was elimination of income taxes on the pensions of retired military, fire and police officers. One governor called for doubling the childcare tax credit while another pushed for reinstitution of the state's child and dependent care tax. Another governor suggested a sales tax holiday for veterans and active military personnel. Tax increases suggested included those for corporate and personal income, cigarettes and gas, retail sales and for the sale of recreational marijuana. Reauthorization of hospital provider fees was promoted by two governors and another asked for the creation of a severance tax.

Regarding health care, most governors discussed the scourge of drug addiction and that of opioids, specifically. Many explained efforts to battle the problem—tamping down on pill mills, doctor shopping, over prescribing and also by engaging numerous preventive strategies. Other medical problems considered important to address by some governors included mental illness, extension of behavioral and rehabilitation services and building additional facilities for these services, youth suicide and cancer. A few governors discussed their state's employee health benefits and programs, calling for some reforms and/or increasing support to municipal health systems as a way to improve the health of the population statewide and bolster local financial sustainability. Several chief executives brought up the need for vigilance in sustaining the Affordable Care Act in light of efforts by the new administration to dismantle universal health care.

Other Issues on the Minds of Governors

Governors brought up a number of other concerns in their speeches that did not fall neatly into the issues as coded. For example, homelessness, tort reform, seniors, foster care, discrimination, worker rights and abortion were all addressed. Gover-

nors in Hawaii, New York and North Carolina considered homelessness. Hawaii Gov. David Ige (D) "proposed \$21 million each year for rent subsidies, supporting services, outreach services and enforcement." New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo (D) pleaded with the state legislature "to advance the historic affordable housing plan initiated in 2016, providing 100,000 units of affordable housing across the State, and 6,000 units of supportive housing ... where the homeless crisis is most dire. We need it now, we need it in the winter, it is time for the state legislature to act." Gov. Roy Cooper (D) characterized HB2 as "the dark cloud hanging over our state of promise" and begged the North Carolina General Assembly to repeal it to "eliminate discrimination and bring back jobs, sports and entertainment." He then asked for collaboration with legislators regarding homelessness, "to work with me to restore allowing the use of federal money for housing so we can start to build our way out of this affordable housing shortage."

Republican governors in Iowa, Kentucky and Texas specifically advocated to curtail abortions. In Iowa, Gov. Terry Branstad (R) called for redirecting "family planning money to organizations that focus on providing health care for women and eliminates taxpayer funding for organizations that perform abortions." Texas Gov. Greg Abbott (R) stated that he "welcomed any legislation that protects unborn children and promotes a culture of life." Gov. Matt Bevin (R) praised new right to work and right to life laws in Kentucky. His argument for policy change seeks to make it uncomfortable for scofflaws to live in the state:

[Our] state has so much going for it and we need to make this a state that if you want to milk the system, Kentucky should be the last state you want to be in. If you want to [scam] welfare, are a sexual predator, or [peddle] drugs, you do not want to live in Kentucky. If you don't respect the law or law officials, you won't want to live in Kentucky. If you are a deadbeat dad, you will want to move to some other state than Kentucky.

Gov. Bevin went on to challenge counties to increase recoupment rates on monies owed for child support to match the currently best performing in the state, Morgan County (78 percent). Also, he challenged communities to a "Beautifying the Bluegrass" competition. Finally, Gov. Bevin warned traditional media to be "dying for a reason" and promoted better accountability and reform in Ken-

tucky. He urged state residents to visit the state's Facebook page, "do your own homework, communicate with your elected officials, live by the golden rule," and send reform ideas to redtapereduction.com, Kentucky's transformation website.

Worker-related reforms were mentioned by others—Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards (D) called for equal pay, increasing minimum wage, and eliminating "pay secrecy by prohibiting employers from taking actions against employees for inquiring about, discussing or disclosing their wages or another employee's wages." Texas Gov. Abbott claimed that "while we are cleaning up government, we should end the practice of government deducting union dues from the paychecks of employees. Taxpayer money shouldn't be used to support the collection of union dues." Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan (R) wants a sick leave law that makes "large companies provide paid sick leave and encourages small businesses to offer paid sick leave by offering tax incentives." Rhode Island Gov. Gina Raimondo (D) pushed for a raise to the minimum wage as well for wages of homecare workers and those caring for the disabled. She also wants law for workers to be able to earn paid sick leave, "to make sure people have a fair shot by allowing them a day off if they're sick or their kid's sick." In Florida, Gov. Rick Scott (R) rallied for \$3.3 million in new funding to provide employment services for thousands of individuals with disabilities who seek to work.

Other interests on the minds of governors included seniors—chief executives in Massachusetts, Montana, and Nevada specified support for programming and additional facilities to support the aged. Governors in Arizona, Georgia, Kansas, Montana, Tennessee, Texas and Wisconsin brought up improvements to foster care and other child services. Among other initiatives, Tennessee's Gov. Haslam asked for new law "protecting the Good Samaritans who save the lives of children and pets." Governors in Arizona and Missouri brought up tort reform and improving court management. In light of the fact that marijuana use by those 21 years or older is legal in Colorado, it may not be surprising that Gov. John Hickenlooper called for dedicating \$7 million of the state budget this year "to educate youth, their parents, and trusted adults about underage [marijuana] use." Wyoming Gov. Matthew Mead (R) promoted sportsman interests, "to share an enjoyment of sporting life with others." He promoted public shooting ranges and shooting competitions. Ohio's governor advocated

a technologically advanced future in which autonomous cars, drones, advanced sensors and big data "will help us solve problems."

Among those discussing state government organization and management, two mentioned initiatives to advance diversity. Gov. Robert Bentley (R) claimed Alabama to be "only the second state" to create a cabinet level office focused on minority communities to concentrate on minority and women's issues—this statement made just before he resigned from office after running from a sex scandal for about a year.¹⁰ Delaware Gov. John Carney (D) asked for implementation of a statewide antidiscrimination policy as well as the creation of a separate agency including a Chief Diversity Officer. New Hampshire's Gov. Chris Sununu (R) presented reorganization in his government, with creation of a specialist within the Office of Substance Abuse, "to work alongside with our Drug Czar...to help coordinate policy focused on treatment, recovery, and prevention." He also called for relocating an economic development division to a new department of Business and Economic Affairs to support better coordinated programming.

Gov. Nathan Deal (R) of Georgia discussed state worker pay raises, including "a 19 percent pay raise for Division of Family and Children Services caseworkers "so that we can both ensure a competitive salary for those who fill these vital roles and so that we can recruit and retain the best possible candidates to look after the safety of our youngest and most vulnerable citizens." Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe (D) promised the state's "teachers, state employees and state-supported local employees a 1.5 percent bonus as a stopgap until revenue conditions allow for a permanent pay increase." Minnesota Gov. Mark Dayton (D) committed to "increasing the percentage of [state] employees with disabilities to seven percent" from the current 6.2 percent.

Concern for veterans ran the gamut in terms of management and policy solutions—Georgia's governor discussed funding to train state employees to better serve veterans and advocated for a "Women Veterans Coordinator who will work with female veterans that have suffered military sexual trauma." Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb (R) talked of "exempting [veteran] pensions from the state income tax, which will make it easier for them to stay here and attract other Patriots to our great state in their post-military careers." Gov. Brian Sandoval (R) of Nevada is intent on making his state "the most veteran and military friendly state

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in the nation.” He has money in his budget for a new veterans’ home, tuition fee waivers for students of military families, and foreclosure protection when servicemen and women are deployed. Gov. Jim Justice (D) of West Virginia also talked about funding veterans’ facilities.

Conclusion

State of state addresses remain fascinating for what governors include in them and maybe, more especially, for what they leave out. Governors use these speeches as their “bully pulpit,” to explain a way forward that has the potential to become a lasting legacy of theirs, good or bad. This year, regardless of their political party, governors faced challenges in crafting their addresses. The national economy has improved since the last deep recession, but not brilliantly. Some states are managing pretty well, and even realizing better finances, while others are suffering, perhaps because of fiscal and policy choices of the past coupled with modern economic forces. But, more importantly at the moment of 2017 speeches, the new federal administration is yet to unfold clearly in terms of its budget and policy future. One of the worst things that politicians face in garnering the public trust is an uncertain future. Today, state governors have the difficult task of communicating with their citizens about a way forward in light of an ambiguous future.

Notes

¹ U.S. state government chief executives report annually or biennially to their legislatures regarding their state’s fiscal condition. They often use their address to lay out their policy and budget agendas for their upcoming or continuing administration. The 2017 state of the state addresses were accessed from January 1–April 10, 2017, via www.nga.org or the state government’s homepage. This research considers the 48 states with transcripts or video available at these sites as of April 10, 2017. All quotes and data presented here are from the addresses accessed on these websites, unless otherwise noted. A gubernatorial address was not available for Oregon and that provided by South Carolina’s Governor Nikki Haley is not included in the data analysis, given that she left the position when appointed by President Donald Trump as the United States Ambassador to the United Nations. To conduct a content analysis of governors’ state of state addresses, as in the past, topics were considered addressed if the chief executive specifically discussed them as relevant to state operations and the budget *going forward*. The governor needed to relay that the function, activity or issue is an important item in next year’s—fiscal 2018—budget and policy direction. Just mentioning a state function or policy area like health care in a speech did not classify the issue

as an agenda item addressed by a governor. Further, a review by a governor of his or her past accomplishments in any particular issue area did not count in this content analysis. Sometimes budget and policy initiatives count for two items on the list of issues considered. For example, a workforce training initiative that specifies both an educational and an economic development component would be coded as an issue of interest to the governor in education as well as economic development and jobs.

² Herz, Nathaniel. (2016). Alaska House will be run by coalition while Senate remains under Republican control. *Alaska Dispatch News*, November 9. Accessed on March 15, 2017, via <https://www.adn.com/politics/2016/11/09/alaska-senate-will-remain-under-republican-control-for-the-next-two-years/>.

³ McKinley, Jesse. (2017). Breakaway Democrats in New York Senate add another to their ranks. *The New York Times*, January 25. Accessed on March 15, 2017, via <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/25/nyregion/independent-democratic-conference-republicans-state-senate.html>.

⁴ Visit the Washington State Senate Majority Coalition Caucus website via <http://majoritycoalition.src.wastateleg.org/>.

⁵ National Governors Association. (2017). *Current Governors by State, Party Affiliation, and Terms in Office*. Accessed on March 15, 2017, via <https://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/GOVLIST.PDF> and National Conference of State Legislatures. (2017). *2016 State and Legislative Partisan Composition*. Accessed on March 15, 2017, via http://www.ncsl.org/portals/1/documents/elections/Legis_Control_2017_March_27_11am.pdf.

⁶ National Association of State Budget Officers. (2017). *The Fiscal Survey of the States, Fall 2016*. Accessed on March 15, 2017 via <http://www.nasbo.org/reports-data/fiscal-survey-of-states>.

⁷ National Association of State Budget Officers. (2017).

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Barrett, Katherine and Greene, Richard. (2017). *Dominant Words in State of State Addresses*. Barrett and Greene, Inc. Accessed April 10 via <http://greenebarrett.com/dominant-words/>.

¹⁰ Blinder, Alan. (2017). Robert Bentley, “Alabama Governor, Resigns Amid Scandal.” *The New York Times* April 10. Accessed April 10, 2017 via https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/10/us/robert-bentley-alabama-governor.html?_r=0.

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